

¶ Ye, swete herte? alas, I may nought ryse
To knele, and do yow honour in som wyse.

¶ And dressede him upward, and she right tho
Gan bothe here hondes softe upon him leye:
O, for the love of God, do ye not so
To me, quod she, ey! what is this to seye?
Sire, come am I to yow for causes tweye;
first, yow to thonke, and of your lordshipe eke
Continuance I wolde yow biseke.

¶ This Troilus, that herde his lady preye
Of lordship him, wex neither quik ne deed,
Ne mighte a word for shame to it seye,
Although men sholde smyten of his heed.
But Lord, so he wex sodeinliche reed,
And sire, his lesson, that he wende conne,
To preyen hir, is thurgh his wit yronne.

Criseyde al this aspyede wel ynough,
for she was wys, and lovede him neverthelasse,
Al nere he malapert, or made it tough,
Or was to bold, to singe a fool a masse.
But whan his shame gan somewhat to passe,
His resons, as I may my rymes holde,
I yow wol telle, as techen bokes olde.

In chaunged vois, right for his verrey drede,
Which vois eek quook, and therto his manere
Goodly abayst, and now his hewes rede,
Now pale, unto Criseyde, his lady dere,
With look down cast and humble yolden chere,
Lo, the alderfirste word that him asterte
Was, twyes: Mercy, mercy, swete herte!

¶ And stinte a whyl, and whan he mighte out-
bringe,
The nexte word was: God wot, for I have,
As feythfully as I have had konninge,
Ben youre, also God my sowle save;
And shal, til that I, woful wight, be grave.
And though I dar ne can unto yow pleyne,
Ywis, I suffre nought the lasse peyne.

Thus muche as now, O wommanliche wyf,
I may outbringe, and if this yow displese,
That shal I wreke upon myn owne lyf
Right sone, I trowe, and doon your herte an ese,
If with my deeth your herte I may apese.
But sin that ye han herd me somewhat seye,
Now recche I never how sone that I deye.

¶ Therwith his manly sorwe to biholde,
It mighte han maad an herte of stoon to rewe;
And Pandare weep as he to watre wolde,
And poked ever his nece newe and newe,
And seyde: Wo bigon ben hertes trewe!
for love of God, make of this thing an ende,
Or slee us bothe at ones, er that ye wende.

¶ I? what? quod she, by God and by my trouthe,
Inoot nought what ye wilne that I seye.

¶ I? what? quod he, that ye han on him routh,
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for Goddes love, and doth him nought to deye.
¶ Now thanne thus, quod she, I wolde him
preye
To telle me the fyn of his entente;
Yet wiste I never wel what that he mente.

¶ What that I mene, O swete herte dere?
Quod Troilus, O goodly fresshe free!
That, with the streames of your eyen clere,
Ye wolde somtyme frendly on me see,
And thanne agreen that I may ben he,
Withoute braunche of vyce in any wyse,
In trouthe alwey to doon yow my servyse

As to my lady right and chief resort,
With al my wit and al my diligence,
And I to han, right as yow list, comfort,
Under your yerde, egal to myn offence,
As deeth, if that I breke your defence;
And that ye deigne me so muche honour,
Me to comaunden ought in any houre.

And I to ben your verray humble trewe,
Secret, and in my paynes pacient,
And evermo desire freshly newe,
To serve, and been plynke ay diligent,
And, with good herte, al holly your talent
Receyven wel, how sore that me smerte,
Lo, this mene I, myn owne swete herte.

¶ Quod Pandarus: Lo, here an hard request,
And resonable, a lady for to werne!
Now, nece myn, by natal Joves fest,
Were I a god, ye sholde sterve as yerne,
That heren wel, this man wol nothing yerne
But your honour, and seen him almost sterve,
And been so looth to suffren him yow serve.

¶ With that she gan hir eyen on him caste
ful esly, and ful debonairly,
Avysing hir, and hyed not to faste
With never a word, but seyde him softly:
Myn honour sauf, I wol wel trewely,
And in swich forme as he can now devyse,
Receyven him fully to my servyse,

Biseching him, for Goddes love, that he
Wolde, in honour of trouthe and gentillesse,
As I wel mene, eek mene wel to me,
And myn honour, with wit and besinesse,
Hy kepe; and if I may don him gladnesse,
from hennesforth, ywis, I nil not feyne:
Now beeth al hool, no lenger ye ne pleyne.

But natheles, this warne I yow, quod she,
A kinges sone although ye be, ywis,
Ye shul namore have soverainetee
Of me in love, than right in that cas is;
Ne I nil forbere, if that ye doon amis,
To wrathen yow; and whyl that ye me serve,
Cherycen yow right after ye deserve.

And shortly, derè herte and al my knight,

Beth glad, and draweth yow to lustinesse,
And I shal trewely, with al my might,
Your bittre tornen al into swetnesse;
If I be she that may yow do gladnesse,
for every wo ye shal recovere a blisse;
¶ And him in armes took, and gan him kisse.

¶ Pandarus on knees, and up his yin
To hevener threw, and held his hondes hye:
Immortal god! quod he, that mayst nought dyen,
Cupide I mene, of this mayst glorifye;
And Venus, thou mayst make melodye;
Withoute hond, me semeth that in towne,
for this mervyle, I here ech belle sowne.

But ho! no more as now of this matere,
for why this folk wol comen up anon,
That han the lettre red; lo, I hem here.
But I conjure thee, Criseyde, and oon,
And two, thou Troilus, whan thou mayst goon,
That at myn hous ye been at my warninge,
for I ful wel shal shape your cominge;

And eseth ther your hertes right ynough;
And lat see which of yow shal bere the belle
To speke of love a right! ¶ Therwith he lough,
for ther have ye a layser for to telle.
¶ Quod Troilus: How longe shal I dwelle
Er this be doon? ¶ Quod he: Whan thou mayst
ryse,
This thing shal be right as I yow devyse.

¶ With that Eleyne and also Deiphebus
Tho comen upward, right at the steyres ende;
And Lord, so than gan grone Troilus,
his brother and his suster for to blende.
Quod Pandarus: It tyme is that we wende;
Tak, nece myn, your leve at alle three,
And lat hem speke, and cometh forth with me.

¶ She took hir leve at hem ful thriftily,
As she wel coude, and they hir reverence
Unto the fulle didnen hardely,
And spoken wonder wel, in hir absence,
Of hir, in preysing of hir excellence,
hir governaunce, hir wit; and hir manere
Commended, it joye was to here.

Now lat hir wende unto hir owne place,
And tome we to Troilus ayein,
That gan ful lightly of the lettre passe,
That Deiphebus hadde in the gardin seyn.
And of Eleyne and him he wolde fayn
Delivered been, and seyde, that him leste
To slepe, and after tales have reste.

Eleyne him kiste, and took hir leve blyve,
Deiphebus eek, and boon wente every wight;
And Pandarus, as faste as he may dryve,
To Troilus tho com, as tyne right;
And on a paillet, al that glade night,
By Troilus he lay, with mery chere,
To tale; and wel was hem they were yfere.

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Whan every wight was voided but they two,
And alle the dores were faste yshette,
To telle in short, withoute wordes mo,
This Pandarus, withouten any lette,
Up roos, and on his beddes syde him sette,
And gan to speken in a sobre wyse
To Troilus, as I shal yow devyse.

¶ Myn alderlevest lord, and brother dere,
God woot, and thou, that it sat me so sore,
Whan I thee saw so languissching toere,
for love, of which thy wo wex alwey more;
That I, with al my might and al my lore,
Have ever sithen doon my bisnesse
To bringe thee to joye out of distresse;

And have it brought to swich plyt as thou wost,
So that, thorough me, thou stondest now in weye
To fare wel, I seye it for no boost,
And wostow why? for shame it is to seye,
for thee have I bigonne a gamen pleye
Which that I never doon shal eft for other,
Although he were a thousand fold my brother.

That is to seye, for thee am I bicomen,
Bitwixen game and earnest, swich a mene
As maken wommen unto men to comen;
Al sey I nought, thou wost wel what I mene.
for thee have I my nece, of vyces clene,
So fully maad thy gentillesse triste,
That al shal been right as thyselfe liste.

But God, that al wot, take I to witnesse,
That never I this for covetyse wroughte,
But only for to abregge that distresse,
for which wel nygh thou deydest, as me thoughte.
But gode brother, do now as thee oughte,
for Goddes love, and keep hir out of blame,
Sin thou art wys, and save alwey hir name.

for wel thou wost, the name as yet of here
Among the peple, as who seyth, halwed is;
for that man is unbore, I dar wel swere,
That ever wiste that she dide amis.
But wo is me, that I, that cause al this,
May thenken that she is my nece dere,
And I hir eem, and traytor eek yfere!

And were it wist that I, through myn engyn,
Hadde in my nece yput this fantasye,
To do thy lust, and hoolly to be thyn,
Why, al the world upon it wolde crye,
And seye, that I the worste trecherye
Dide in this cas, that ever was bigonne,
And she forlost, and thou right nought ywonne.

¶ Therefore, er I wol ferther goon a pas,
Yet eft I thee biseche and fully seye,
That privetee go with us in this cas,
That is to seye, that thou us never wreye;
And be nought wrooth, though I thee ofte preye
To holden secree swich an heigh matere;
for skilful is, thou wost wel, my preyere.

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